

**California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Los Angeles Region**

**Executive Officer's Report  
Dennis A. Dickerson, Executive Officer**

**March 2, 1998**

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\*\*\* The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption

\*\*\* For a list of simple ways to reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see the tips at: <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/news/echallenge.html>

### **Regional Board Staff Appointments**

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Jim Kuykendall as Assistant Executive Officer, thereby filling a long-standing vacancy. This appointment is effective immediately. Jim brings to this position extensive experience in the public and private sector and very strong engineering credentials. He was formerly an Assistant Executive Officer with the Lahontan Region (in which he served in several positions from 1972 through 1986), General Manager and Chief Engineer of the Mammoth Community Water District, and a private consulting engineer with a firm in South Lake Tahoe. He received his M.S. in Environmental Engineering from Stanford University and is a Professional Engineer.

Additionally, I am announcing the appointment of Catherine Tyrrell to a new assignment as Coastal Water Programs Director. This new assignment is a significant one for our Board creating a specific role for Catherine as a steward for our coastal water resources. This is becoming an increasingly important program area, as noted by the Governor's recent Coastal Initiative, and one in which we need a dedicated high-level manager to address. In this position, Catherine will continue to play an active role in many key projects she is already engaged in, such as the Coastal Initiative, watershed planning, and our efforts to address contaminated sediments in our harbors and bays.

With Catherine Tyrrell's assignment as Coastal Water Programs Director, the position she held as Assistant Executive Officer is now vacant. I have designated Debbie Smith as Acting Assistant Executive Officer. This is an interim assignment pending completion of the process to select a permanent AEO.

With Debbie Smith serving as Acting AEO, I have designated Wendy Phillips as Acting Regional Programs Section Chief. Wendy will assume this responsibility immediately as well as continuing her management of the Standards and Enforcement unit.

With Jim Kuykendall serving as AEO, I have designated David Bacharowski as Acting Underground Storage Tanks (UST) Section Chief.

### **1998 Water Quality Assessment and 303(d) Listing Workshops**

The Water Quality Assessment (WQA) is a process by which staff, using available data, assess whether the Region's waterbodies are impaired and thus not supporting their beneficial uses. Those waterbodies that are determined to be impaired are compiled in the 303(d) List. Waterbodies on the 303(d) list must be prioritized and scheduled to have Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDLs) established for them.

In order to ensure that the most recent data was used in the assessment, once the draft WQA and 303(d) List were released for public comment, two workshops were held, one in Ventura and one in Monterey Park. Board member Jack Coe participated in the workshop. A second workshop was held to walk through the data analysis used to add each of the waterbody impairments in the most recent priority watersheds, Calleguas Creek and Santa Clara River.

At these workshops the following topics were discussed: the data sources and the criteria used to assess impairment; the list of waterbody impairments that had either been added or dropped from the 1996 303(d) list; and an overview of the TMDL process. At these workshops, staff requested interested parties to submit additional data to either support or refute the proposed listings. Following receipt of comments, a responsiveness summary will be prepared and distributed to the public. The 303(d) list will be presented to the Board for their review and approval.

### **El Nino Rains Contribute to Major Spills in Region**

Heavy rains contributed to many spills that occurred during the month. Among these was a major spill from the City of Thousand Oaks that resulted in one of the largest spills in our Region's history. A brief review of the spills is presented below:

#### **Ventura County**

Approximately 70 million gallons of raw sewage to Calleguas Creek watershed due to a line break to the City of Thousand Oaks Hill Canyon Treatment Plant. The break was first noted on February 3, 1998, and temporary repairs were completed on February 14. On February 9, 1998, a Cleanup and Abatement Order (CAO) was issued to the City of Thousand Oaks. The CAO included a time schedule requiring the City to: submit a preliminary report to the Regional Board; complete a site assessment; submit a final report on immediate actions taken; and submit a plan for long term corrective action.

Ojai Valley Sanitary District had two major spills. The first, a pipe break on February 7, 1998, released approximately 2.5 million gallons to San Antonio Creek before being bypassed. The second was a washout of a section of pipe in Ventura River. Approximately 22,500 gallons were released to the river before the pipe could be bypassed. To date, the temporary bypasses remain intact.

Point Mugu Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) has exceeded the capacity of their collection system numerous times in the last two months; however, on February 14, 1998, NAWS lost their ability to pump to temporary holding ponds on base when a bridge and two pipelines were carried away in the high velocity flows of Calleguas Creek. In the latest spill report, approximately 445,000 gallons of sewage surfaced from the collection system. As of February 19th, the problem had not been corrected.

Approximately 8,400 gallons of crude oil escaped a pipe that was sheared by a mud slide in Hall Canyon. The spill was contained and cleaned with very little oil making its way to the ocean.

Approximately 22,000 gallons of sewage was released from a pipe that was ruptured in its crossing of Calleguas Creek. The break occurred on February 8, and the following day the line was

bypassed with no further problems.

### **Los Angeles County**

Six sewage overflows were reported on February 7. The major one (approx. 180,000 gallons) occurred in the City of Pico Rivera and was fully contained by County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County before reaching the receiving waters. The others were of much less volume, however, some did reach the San Gabriel River and Rio Hondo.

Approximately 2,500 gallons of sewage were released from an 8 inch pipeline due to the heavy rain on February 8 in City of Los Angeles. Fortunately, no waterway was involved.

Los Angeles County Los Coyotes Wastewater Reclamation Plant had a filter bypass of approximately 1.58 million gallons during the heavy rains between 2:50 p.m. and 9:20 p.m. on February 14.

Several low-volume spills (less 100 gallons) also occurred because of pipeline rupture, sunken vessel, and tank overflow due to the heavy rain.

In response to the many spills noted above, Regional Board staff were in the field inspecting spill sites and working with local officials to remedy the spills as quickly as possible.

### **South El Monte "Hot Spot" Investigation**

Board staff have been assisting a group of potentially responsible parties (PRPs) in South El Monte Operable Unit to complete required facility assessment and remediation work. Results of phase one assessment were released on January 9, 1998, for an area designated as Area I and consisting of a number of small businesses in South El Monte. On January 22, 1998, a meeting was held among the representatives of Board staff, the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority (WQA), the PRPs and their consultants to discuss the results of phase one assessment. Board staff recommended soil cleanup for facilities where high concentration of VOCs were detected. In a letter dated February 11, 1998, Board staff sent written comments providing information and recommendations for locations of additional groundwater monitoring wells for Area I.

### **Arcadia Wellfield**

Regional Board staff has been working with Mobil Oil Corporation (Mobil), the City of Santa Monica (City) and USEPA on the MTBE problems at the City's Arcadia Wellfield. A substantial evaluation effort and some cleanup have been accomplished at the former Mobil station site. After Cleanup and Abatement Order 98-001 was issued to Mobil on January 7, 1998, Mobil and the City have been developing a cooperative agreement between themselves to oversee the remediation of the wellfield and the aquifer. Their work toward this agreement has caused some delays in shorter term deadlines, but we have stressed our concern for meeting the long term deadlines and goals of the Order.

### **Charnock Wellfield**

Field work by potentially responsible parties continues this month. Reports on the work are due by the end of March. Board staff and USEPA staff met with representatives of Shell and Chevron concerning additional evaluation of potential pipeline leakage. The extent of the additional work has not been completely defined, but is expected to be finalized by the end of the month.

### **Underground Storage Tanks Roundtable**

On February 4, 1998, UST program managers for all nine Regional Boards and State Board staff

met for the second in a renewed series of program manager roundtables. The Los Angeles Regional Board was host to this session that was held in the Children's Court Building that is adjacent to our office. The roundtable discussion included workload allocations, closure criteria, Region to Region consistency, and responses to audit comments by the Regions to the SWRCB.

### **Puente Valley Operable Unit**

On January 28, 1998, Regional Board staff participated in a U.S. EPA sponsored community meeting to present the proposed plan for addressing the VOC contamination in the Puente Valley Operable Unit of the San Gabriel Valley Superfund site. The preferred alternative is to contain contamination at the mouth of the Puente Valley in both the shallow and intermediate aquifer zones. The proposed plan is performance based, which means that the plan does not specify the method of compliance allowing more flexibility in meeting the objectives.

### **Former Ojai Burn Dump, Ventura County**

A Cleanup and Abatement Order was issued to the County of Ventura in September 1997 to require the County to mitigate landfill slope erosion and exposed waste at the former Ojai Burn Dump. The erosion is caused from undercutting by the Ventura River during heavy flows. Regional Board staff expected that the situation at the dumpsite would be exacerbated by encroaching El Niño storms, so the Order contained a very tight time schedule for mitigation.

While the County of Ventura made every effort to adhere to the time schedule, delays were experienced in obtaining permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which were required before mitigation work could commence. Before mitigation commenced, recent large storms in Ventura County caused additional erosion to the landfill, exposing more waste. Heavy flows in the Ventura River prevent any mitigation work from being performed until the Ventura River recedes. Regional Board staff will continue to monitor conditions at this site.

### **Azusa Landfill**

Regional Board staff met with representatives of Browning-Ferris Industries (BFI) on February 11, 1998, to discuss a schedule for closing the 80-acre unlined portion of the Azusa Landfill. In June 1997, BFI sold the entire 302-acre Azusa Landfill to USA Waste. However, BFI retains the responsibility for gas control, past placement of municipal solid waste (MSW), and closure for the 80-acre portion. MSW has not been accepted since October 1996. Other wastes, including treated petroleum hydrocarbon contaminated soil and inert materials, have continued to be placed in the 80-acre portion. Current surface contours of the 80-acre unlined portion meet drainage requirements for closure. A conceptual design for final cover, the ability of the existing cover to inhibit infiltration of surface water, and a time schedule for completing closure, will be submitted to the Regional Board in March.

### **Toland Road Landfill, Ventura County**

On January 27, 1998, staff received a letter from an owner of property adjacent to Toland Road Landfill who was concerned that foam he was seeing in O'Leary Creek between Toland Road and Hall Road was the result of landfill operations. Numerous photographs were included with his letter showing a beige colored foam on top of flowing water. Staff inspected O'Leary Creek January 30, February 6, and February 10, 1998, and saw no significant amounts of foam. The small amount of foam observed appeared to be consistent with streams carrying turbid water as the result of runoff from rain storms. During the February 10th inspection, staff was accompanied by staff from the Ventura County Environmental Health Department and the Ventura Regional Sanitation District. The staff from Ventura Regional Sanitation District stated that they would try and obtain a sample of the foam the next day for analysis. The results of the sampling will be submitted for review by Regional Board staff when available.

## **Contaminated Sediment Management Plan**

Recently passed legislation, SB 673 (Karnette), requires the Regional Board and the California Coastal Commission to coordinate efforts of the Los Angeles Contaminated Sediments Task Force to prepare a Contaminated Sediments Management Plan. The objective is to develop a consensus among agencies and interest groups as to proper management of dredged materials. Board staff is participating with other interested agencies in the development of a work plan for this multi-year effort. Key issues to be addressed include proper disposal methods and permit streamlining.

## **Stormwater Workshop**

On a rainy and traffic-choked January 29th, the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project, LA Regional Water Quality Control Board and the Southern California Association of Governments co-sponsored a workshop for elected officials entitled, "Los Angeles County Stormwater Permit: Myths and Realities." Over 110 persons, including elected officials and staff of 52 cities and other organizations, attended the workshop which explored a host of topics associated with the implementation of the municipal storm water permit.

Board member Marilyn Lyon helped to plan the workshop and she was joined at the event by Board members, Jack Coe, Hamid Nahai and Chuck Milam.

Featured speakers included Dr. Stephen Weisberg of the Southern California Coastal Waters Research Project, Dennis Dickerson of the LA Regional Water Quality Control Board, and Don Wolfe of Los Angeles County's Department of Public Works. A spectrum of perspectives on the permit was showcased in a lively question and answer panel, moderated by Burt Margolin of the Santa Monica Bay Watershed Council, which included Councilmember Eileen Ansari of Diamond Bar; Dr. Mark Gold of Heal the Bay; Gary Hildebrand of LA County Department of Public Works; Jorge Leon, Regional Board Counsel; Dan Meer of USEPA Region 9; Ray Tahir, consultant to cities; and Catherine Tyrrell of the LA Regional Board.

Jan Fambro and Shelly Fischer-Long of Rogers and Associates presented the "Los Angeles County Storm Water Public Education Strategy" during the lunch hour. The afternoon sessions focused on financing and implementation tool for municipal storm water programs. Participating in these panels were Neil Miller of Manhattan Beach, Chris Campbell of the Southern California Coalition for Pollution Prevention, Anthony Nisich of Santa Clarita, Sharon Gosselin of Alameda County and Robert Westdyke of Camarillo. Board Member Mary Jane Forster of the State Water Resources Control Board wrapped up the day with inspiring closing remarks.

Results of evaluation surveys indicated high marks for the workshop program with attendees urging continuation of these types of outreach and educational efforts.

## **Public Workshops held on Cost Effectiveness**

On February 24th (El Monte) and February 25th (Ventura), the Regional Board held two workshops to explore interested party concerns and suggestions to improve the cost effectiveness of Regional Board programs. The workshops represented an opportunity for individuals who are regulated through programs administered by the Regional Board and to offer their insights into how these programs can be improved by reducing costs for regulatory requirements. Comments received during the workshops will be reviewed by the Regional Board's Task Committee on Cost Benefits and a report prepared for consideration by the full Board. One outcome from the workshops will be the establishment of a permanent working group to explore cost benefit issues on a periodic basis.

## **Enforcement**

The LA County Bar Association sponsored an Environmental and Land Use Symposium on February 24th. Jorge Leon and Wendy Phillips provided an overview of the Regional Board's enforcement strategy during a panel discussion entitled "Enforcement and Compliance--Striking a Balance between Environmental Protection and Economic Recovery." Other participants on the panel included representatives from Heal the Bay and the City of Los Angeles.

### **Meeting held with Heal the Bay Enforcement Report Author**

On February 9th, staff met with Steven Flieschli, author of the Heal the Bay report critical of the Regional Board's enforcement record over the past six years. The meeting was helpful in better understanding the information contained in the report and the data used in its development. During the meeting, Mr. Fleischli provided staff with additional information Heal the Bay had developed regarding TSD facilities not having filed Notices of Intent for stormwater (these are now being reviewed) and a detailed listing of commercial and multi-family units in the City of Malibu possibly operating septic tanks without having been issued a WDR by this Board.

Separately, a letter to the editor has been developed and submitted to the Los Angeles Times in response to their coverage of the Heal the Bay report.

### **CWEA Industrial and Hazardous Waste Conference**

On February 9, 1998, Mark Pumford of the Ventura Coastal Watershed Unit gave a presentation at the California Water Environment Association's annual Industrial and Hazardous Waste Conference in Huntington Beach. The presentation, entitled The Watershed Approach and its Effect on Small Pretreatment Programs was given to a group of 62 pretreatment program managers from programs throughout the West. The presentation used the Ventura River and Calleguas Creek Watersheds as examples of implementing the California Toxics Rule on a watershed basis and keeping up with the changing focus of source control programs. Questions from the group were regarding the costs to small treatment plants of added limits and monitoring requirements. Concern was also expressed that many of the contaminants causing toxicity in receiving waters are common throughout the State, and that the State should shoulder the responsibility for public outreach or possibly banning products that contribute these contaminants to the waste stream.

### **Freedom of Information Act and Public Records Act Requests for the Month of December 1997, and January 1998.**

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and Public Record Act (PRA) requests to review or copy public documents are a very important part of the work at the Regional Board. The FOIA and PRA cover most of the documents at the Regional Board. Recently, the State legislature adopted statutory language requiring that these requests be tracked by the Regional Boards. The FOIA and PRA require agencies to provide a response on the availability of the requested document within 10 working days (FOIA) or 10 calendar days (PRA) of receiving the request. The Regional Board has developed a procedure and a database to track these requests.

During the month of December, 1997, 8 FOIA/PRA requests were received and processed, and in all cases, a response was provided within the mandated time frame.

During the month of January, 1998, 14 FOIA/PRA requests were received and processed, and in all cases, a response was provided within the mandated time frame.

## **WATERSHED REPORTS**

### **Calleguas Creek Watershed**

The Steering Committee recently interviewed and are now negotiating a contract with a firm which

will act as the Watershed Committee's program manager. The consultants will be working with the various committees to produce a newsletter, an early action program and a detailed outline of the watershed plan itself. The Water Quality/Water Resources Subcommittee is taking the lead in drafting a Water Resources/Water Quality Chapter in the Calleguas Creek Watershed Management Plan that will serve as model for other chapters. Subcommittee members have developed a list of their goals and objectives for water quality and water resources and are working to clarify participants' goals and objectives, identify possible solutions to problems, pinpoint concrete actions which will be taken to address the problems, filter out long-term from short-term goals, and reach agreement on what issues to deal with first. Two early action items identified were utilization of agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) and the issue of use of residential/commercial water softeners. The subcommittee met on January 23.

The Flood Protection/Sedimentation Subcommittee last met on December 8. The group is continuing to refine their list of flooding, drainage, erosion and sedimentation, and flood water conservation and re-use considerations and are proceeding to prioritize these items.

A new group is being formed, the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Subcommittee. Its first meeting is pending.

The first meeting of the Public Education/Outreach Subcommittee took place on January 21. The subcommittee will work on producing an educational brochure covering Calleguas Creek Watershed issues and watershed management in general.

The full Management committee met on February 4. Agenda items included presentations on agricultural BMPs and Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). Information about the management committee and its subcommittees can be found at "[www.calleguas.com](http://www.calleguas.com)".

Staff met with representatives of the watershed's dischargers concerning the Calleguas Creek Characterization Study workplan on February 3; the workplan is close to being finalized.

### **Los Angeles River Watershed**

The Los Angeles/San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council met on January 21. Meetings are generally held at the Los Angeles County Public Works facility in Alhambra at 900 S. Fremont Avenue on the third Wednesday of each month. The Watershed Council has a number of committees including Finance and Representation, Three-Year Watershed Study (interaction with LA River Task Force), Stakeholder Programs, Public Education and Outreach, Projects, and Research. The Finance and Representation Committee has made a plea for financial support for the Watershed Council. Another committee was formed to undertake prioritization of projects for Proposition A funding. The committee met on January 6 at the Regional Board to develop initial recommendations.

### **Santa Monica Bay Watershed**

The Modeling and Monitoring Subcommittee of the Malibu Creek Watershed Advisory Council met on February 5 to begin work on developing a watershed-wide monitoring program for the Malibu Creek Watershed.

Other Santa Monica Bay Watershed activities are covered under the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project item.

## **SPILLS REPORTED IN LOS ANGELES/VENTURA COUNTIES DURING DECEMBER 1997 AND JANUARY 1998**

**DECEMBER 1997**

**All Reported Spills**

Chemical.....	10
Crude oil.....	1
Diesel.....	12
Gasoline.....	4
Miscellaneous petroleum products.....	12
Oil.....	5
Other.....	4
Sewage.....	15
Waste water.....	2
Vapors.....	17
Total.....	72

**Spills Which Entered Waterways or Waters**

Chemical.....	1
Crude oil.....	1
Diesel.....	7
Gasoline.....	1
Miscellaneous petroleum products.....	5
Oil.....	1
Other.....	2
Sewage.....	6
Waste water.....	2
Total.....	26

**JANUARY 1998**

**All Reported Spills**

Chemical.....	10
Crude oil.....	7
Diesel.....	12
Gasoline.....	3
Miscellaneous petroleum products.....	10
Oil.....	6
Sewage.....	15
Waste water.....	7
Vapors.....	4
Total.....	74

**Spills Which Entered Waterways or Waters**

Chemical.....	1
Crude oil.....	1
Diesel.....	7
Gasoline.....	1
Miscellaneous petroleum products.....	5
Oil.....	1
Other.....	2
Sewage.....	6
Waste water.....	2
Total.....	40